

General Comments of SASP from ATF Members

June 2019

- The draft is extremely well-written and reflects considerable and constructive effort.
- Most ATF comments are not extensive. They are more focused on adding a few words and phrases in various locations.
- One major comment that they considered important is the integration of IOOS data into farm siting models (Section 2, pages 25-26).
- ATF members discussed with Mike Rust the fact that some environmental NGOs are critical of fish production, and sometimes misinterpret the term “industry” to as a negative term, or to mean some presumed industrial approach that may or may not occur in the U.S. They suggest adopting terminology that avoids “industry” where possible, and communicates US aquaculture is composed primarily of family farms. They suggested alternative terms such as “aquaculture producers” or “aquaculture farms.”
- As a general comment, the SASP seems very complex for what is still a relatively small U.S. aquaculture industry. They requested a little more background in the beginning on current production from U.S. aquaculture and the volume of imported aquaculture products to illustrate the potential. It should be brief, succinct, and it was suggested it could provide a web-link to where more extensive background is provided (i.e. the NOAA Aquaculture web page).
- Where government support is needed is in research areas or topics that are difficult for industry to capitalize themselves, generally those that require a more long term time line, or are overly costly to work out.
- Improved efficiency is largely driven by selection of efficient aquaculture species, which should be a primary focus. This means species that will thrive in a farm environment: they adapt well to farm conditions, grow quickly to market size, have a tolerance to fish density, feeding behavior is easily monitored, and yield a high percentage of edible meat (have low carcass waste when processed). These should all be taken into account in efficiency research.
- Since selection of potential species candidates is important, ATF suggests some discussion on the characteristics NOAA is looking for in an aquaculture species would be helpful. There may be value in listing potential candidate species in an appendix to the SASP.
- Recognizing that the research needs will likely exceed available funding, the ATF discussed the importance of developing and identifying a *process* for how to decide on priorities and including this in the SASP. It should be a type of roadmap for how to prioritize, and they stressed the importance of engaging industry, and not just the research community, as part of the process. Competitors are doing this on a species and facility basis.